1858 The Daily Colonist. 1959

"An Independent Newspaper, The Organ of No Clique or Party"

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Published every morning except Monday by the Colonist Publishers Ltd. at 2631 Douglas Street, Victoria, B.C.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 1959

Unreasonable Stand

THE leaders of the B.C. Government Employees' Association in a sudden change of front appear to be taking an unreasonable stand in the negotiation of remaining civil service differences with the provincial cabinet. The strike ballot taken last week was definitely on the issue of salary scales. Premier Bennett met the unfavorable expression of civil service opinion reflected in the result by direct action; the Province has provided $3,000,000 per annum all told to cover retroactive and forward adjustments in the salary ratings of considerable numbers in the government's employment. Had this action been taken sooner it would have saved the administration from the position of retiring in the face of a strike threat. The salient fact is, however, that better salaries are to be paid.

The public, watching both sides of the dispute and noting the level of the new rates which will be paid in the government service—and they appear to be comparable to standards pertaining in commercial life and in some instances higher—have a direct interest in the result because it is the public which must pay this bill. Sympathy in favor of overdue salary readjustment has cooled considerably since it has become known that bargainers for the B.C. Government Employees' Association are persisting in an unwise ultimatum. The Province has already awarded $1,500,000 in retroactive adjustments to pay scales, and $1,500,000 additional to carry forward the actual, on the spot increases to be made now. That is a substantial meeting of the initial requests.

By saying that the association will not accept this tendered relief unless it is accompanied by full recognition of bargaining right, approved recommendations in the report of Dr. F. A. Carrothers and other matters, the employees' officials are carrying the ultimatum beyond all reason. What differences there may still be in the dispute could surely be better settled now through quiet negotiation, and not in this atmosphere of recrimination and threat. Beyond that, a strike vote called on the salary issue can scarcely be stretched in any such fashion to cover incidental differences. Many civil servants privately have said so, while from the public there is not likely to be either sympathy or support for this resort to unreasonableness. It is also a prime question if such a strike were to ensue now in the light of all the attending circumstances it would be legal.

From the taxpayers' standpoint, a $3,000,000 settlement of the salary issue is not a little one. Any further action now to blow up the fires of dissension over far lesser remaining differences will undoubtedly have immediate and contrary public reaction. If the issue were put to them plainly in another ballot, how many civil servants today would be ready "to strike"?

Example of Loyalty

WHEN the Royal Jubilee Hospital building fund appeal to the public begins officially on Monday it will be with the comforting knowledge that one-fifth of the sum required already has been subscribed or pledged from within the hospital itself.

The old maxim that charity begins at home never was more impressively demonstrated than in the results of the canvass of members of the Jubilee staffs. Among them they have contributed more than $76,000, and the total is expected to pass the $80,000 mark before the end of this week. That is a truly remarkable example of loyalty to the institution in which they work. It means that on the medical side the doctors on the permanent staff and those who attend patients in the hospital have put up an average of more than $575 each, and that the non-medical employees, some of whom receive very small salaries in comparison with standards outside, have subscribed or pledged an average of more than $50 a head. This must surely be the highest rate of voluntary fund raising ever attained in this region.

In addition to setting a sterling example for industry, business and the public generally, the response to the canvass within the hospital walls is convincing proof of the faith in the worthiness of the appeal held by those in the best position to appreciate the necessity for it. All these doctors, nurses, orderlies and others who have put up thier own money to support the institution where they work are in daily contact with the hospital's serious and increasing accommodation problems, and understand better than anyone else why the projected additions are urgently needed.

The total required by way of voluntary subscription within the area served by Jubilee is $410,000, and the $330,000 remaining to be raised when the general appeal is launched presents a challenge to the community. If the response is anything approaching that inside the hospital itself, success is assured.

Wheat Conference Agrees

SOME 39 nations dealing through the international wheat pool reached accord this week on a three-year pact between producers and importers of the cereal around the free world. Meeting at Geneva, the conferees concurred in a ceiling of $1.90 and a floor of $1.50 per bushel for wheat under the new agreement. The fact of accord, as much as the terms of settlement, should have a stabilizing effect on the world's grain markets. Great Britain's return to the wheat pool after an absence of six years was welcomed.

As one of the signers of the agreement, Canada has an exporting interest in the success of the pool's operation. It was Canadian action in part which forced Britain out of the wheat pool six years ago. Under happier circumstances now, the fresh agreement undoubtedly will have its influence in steadying chaotic conditions in the world market and in providing more dependable terms of trading. It should also eliminate wheat dumping under conditions which made all marketing insecure, and left some exporters of grain with vast accumulating and unsold reserves. The principal aim of the pool is orderly marketing to bring the producers and users together on fair competitive terms.

Interpreting the News

Iraq in Balancing Act

By JOSEPH MacSWEEN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

THE Iraqi rebels apparently want to steer their country into a closer alliance with President Nasser and his United Arab Republic, but many questions are unanswered.

Perhaps the most accurate summary, however cloudy, of Western diplomatic reaction to the new Iraqi struggle was given by John D. Profumo, British minister of state for foreign affairs, when he said:

"The situation is clearly very confused."

It has been confused in fact since Abdel Karim Kassem and his army comrades staged their swift revolution last July; killing King Faisal, Crown Prince Abdul Ilah and Premier Nuri Said, the strong man who led Iraq for a generation.

Kassem, a brooding soldier, emerged as premier. Since then he has repeatedly been described as a man walking a political tight rope between Communist influences and the pan-Arab ambitions of Nasser.

Kassem made it clear that he would not attach oil-rich Iraq, which borders Syria, to Nasser's Egyptian-Syrian union, and he seemed more and more to seek a Communist counter-weight.

He professed friendship for Nasser, but stopped right there. Nothing came of Nasser's offer last October to meet Kassem in Cairo, Baghdad or at the border.

Kassem has received Communist arms and signed trade agreements with the Soviet Union, Red China and East Germany. But he also signed a trade pact with Yugoslavia, which although Communist is unfriendly to the Kremlin.

All this gives a picture of a man trying to balance opposing and "hungry" friends. As usual in Middle East politics, the dividing lines between ideological conflict and the constant battles between the ins and the outs are so confused that it is difficult to draw conclusions.

Iraq, a country smaller than Manitoba, is expected to export 40,000,000 tons of oil this year, and that would mean royalties of $280,000,000.

Petroleum executives say a prolonged civil war could shut down the industry, but a quick victory for either side would not bring any major change.

The Good Earth

Thinking Aloud

". . . of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings."

By TOM TAYLOR

IN a matter of weeks now there will be a tocsin sounded across the land, the familiar cry of the baseball diamond: "Play Ball!"

Some people will be uninterested, thinking as they do that athletics are for those of little wit and little knowledge. A pity, for they know not what they scorn.

It is a happy injunction, this summons to a field wherein the only weapons are a bat and a ball, symbolic of all the summer sporting activities that shortly will be under way.

It has another meaning, too, for those who would stop, look and listen. The gusto with which North America will follow for six months the fortunes of baseball clubs, great and small, is ample proof of where the main interest of peace-loving peoples really lies.

* * *

For it is on the diamond, and on the counterparts peculiar to other sports and recreations, that if left alone North America would focus its attention rather than on war and threats of war.

"Play Ball!"

There is a wider application in this arresting challenge, a hint that has passed into daily favor so that if you play ball with me and vice versa, in any endeavor whatsoever, the assumption is that fair play will be the rule between us.

Naturally there are other games in Canada and the United States, and particularly in Victoria where the variety is extensive, which arouse equal interest. Baseball has its peers and the list is long. Just as in the realms of literature, drama or music it takes all kinds to suit all tastes. Many different games are required to satisfy players and spectators alike.

That is as it should be; the catholicity of man is one of his chief delights.

But "Play Ball" is specially indicative of summer and pleasant carefree days to come. It is a tocsin of calm content. So let us play ball and ignore, if we can, the unpleasantries that never cease to intrude on our thoughts.

* * *

Baseball, as it happens, is not this writer's particular sport. No sport becomes wholly one's own when the introduction to it comes only as an adult. Some of the finer nuances of the diamond are beyond me. I do not recognize a curve when the ball swerves right in front of my eyes, although I know in theory what is supposed to be going on.

Nor do I understand the ritual of the seventh-inning stretch and no one has yet fully explained it to me. But none of this matters.

With baseball, as indeed with the arts or any other recreation, some times it pays merely to sit back and take entertainment as it comes. Too clinical an eye can spoil the pleasure.

Athletes in action are a fine sight and a heartening influence, for good I think even in spite of teapot tempests aroused by the eccentricities of umpires or referees. Would that all tempests could be packed into such small containers.

So, then, let us forget our worries for a space and get ready to answer the call soon to be heard across the land. Each of us can choose his own favorite game, or recreation, for the tocsin is symbolic as well as specific.

"Play Ball!"

A good slogan, and if we follow it off as well as on the field so much the better.

Gerald Waring

Reports from Ottawa

MENTION of the Avro Arrow again may be enough to impel you to turn the page, quickly. But before we close the book on this unhappy and costly adventure, I think something needs saying about why the Americans didn't buy the CF-105.

The simple answer is that they were interested in a fighting weapon capable of destroying supersonic jet bombers. And even after spending $341,000,000, that was something we didn't have.

The Arrow might have become that, in time. But the Americans couldn't afford to wait and gamble on the 105. Especially as they had doubts about the engines, missiles and electronic gear which the RCAF proposed to put into this airplane.

You see, the Arrow on which USAF officers reported favorably in 1957 was minus these elements. It was just a shell of a weapon, a breathtakingly beautiful airframe wheeled out of a hangar at Malton. It wasn't much more than that a year and some months later, when the U.S. finally said "no."

* * *

There might have been—and some day there would have been—a different and happier denouement—

1. If the 105 had been powered by an engine tried and trusted by the Americans — for example, the Curtis-Wright J-75 jet—instead of the new and untried Iroquois.

2. If the RCAF had adopted the fire control system which the Hughes Aircraft Company developed for the USAF at a cost of about $100,000,000. Instead, the RCAF insisted on developing a much more sophisticated electronic navigation, target-seeking and fire-control system. My sources tell me the USAF believed the RCAF performance specifications on Astra, as this program was called, were unrealistic and unlikely to be achieved. Astra was cancelled last September, a dead loss at $24,000,000.

3. If the RCAF had adopted the USAF's Falcon missile instead of taking over development of the Sparrow II missile from the U.S. Navy. The navy's stated reason for discontinuing the Sparrow II was lack of funds. It is hard to imagine the Americans dropping a missile of any real promise for such a reason.

Last September the government also chopped off the Sparrow, but not before that bird had wasted more than $26,000,000 and had contributed to the wastage of a vastly greater sum.

* * *

This is now water over the dam —or, more literally, money down the drain. But before we bury memory of this failure in some dim recess of our national mind, I think two points should be made.

First, the Arrow was never a weapon, and the USAF should not be criticized for refusing to buy it. The Arrow is a purely Canadian fiasco.

Second, that while there is no cause to doubt the good intentions of the RCAF officers who laid down the specifications for the Arrow's engines, fire control system and weapons, there is cause to question their judgment and their fitness to continue in positions of high responsibility.

I am not suggesting any witch hunt in the RCAF for Arrow scapegoats. But the RCAF already is drafting specifications it wants met by whatever strike aircraft the government decides to build in Canada for the 12 RCAF squadrons in Europe. As a taxpayer I would like reassurance that the officers drawing up these specs are not the same ones who made the decisions on the Arrow and its associated equipment.

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

A niece of mine has two TV sets, a large fixed one that is part of the permanent furniture of her living room, and a large portable.

It is not at all unusual to call on her and find her sitting calmly with both on at the same time.

"Well," she says, "most nights there are at least two programs I want to see at the same time. So I do."

"But, good heavens," I protested, "what a din, what confusion!"

"Nonsense," says she. "You just belong to that older generation that can remember horses and buggies. You are the one-thing-at-a-time generation. Everybody in the new generation can do not two but four or five things at once. For instance, at a bridge party I can carry on six conversations at the same time, hear everything and make myself intelligible to the other five. Anybody can do that. I can get the supper, entertain the children, telephone three friends, take the things out of the dryer, listen to the TV the children have on, and hear my own choice of program on the portable in the kitchen, all at the same time.

"As far as TV is concerned, even the very top programs have plenty of dull spots, commercials and so on. And when I have the two on, I find they very seldom collide as far as interest is concerned."

I suppose the human mind is capable of considerable expansion to accommodate the new.

Fun, Fact and Fiction

An advanced type of refrigerator is said to have "no compressor, no refrigerant, no moving parts, no noise, no vibration," but what's so new about that? We had one of those years ago—a box fastened outside the kitchen window.

* * *

Humor, unless it is unintended, is relatively rare in official government publications. Exception is found in a recent bulletin sent out by the Ontario department of lands and forests. The bulletin is intended to serve as a guide to those who want to catch a porcupine, and says: "The best way to effect his capture is to wait until he's in the open. Then, watching for his slapping tail, rush in and quickly pop a large washtub over him. Thus you have something to sit on while you figure out the next move."

Washington Angle

Steps 'Short Of War'

By DAVID LAWRENCE

COMMON sense is more important than the wiles of diplomacy, and that's why President Eisenhower's remarks deploring excessive talk about war and threats of war could have a sobering effect just now on international relations.

The president had ample opportunity at his press conference to be blustering and accusatory, but he dealt with Khrushchev's peculiar tactics in the Berlin crisis by using the mild words of restraint.

As Mr. Eisenhower sees it, the United States has certain responsibilities in maintaining, under treaty rights, the present status of Berlin. He welcomes negotiation and discussion by the four foreign ministers.

* * *

More and more it is becoming apparent that the Kremlin dictatorship would like to scare the West into some form of abject submission and that behind its every move is propaganda designed to assure the Soviet people that the Kremlin rulers are winning big victories.

To some extent Khrushchev has succeeded in scaring some members of Congress, as they are already calling for partial or total mobilization in this country. To yield to this sentiment would be a mistake, Mr. Eisenhower thinks, because there is no telling how long such an uncomfortable posture would have to be maintained. In all likelihood the Kremlin would be glad to inflict a costly and prolonged inconvenience of this kind on the American people.

Modern war doesn't require any large-scale mobilization if it's to be nuclear. Airplanes are in readiness, both in the United States and at Western bases in Europe, to inflict severe punishment on an enemy if war comes. But if the military moves are confined to ground action in the vicinity of Berlin, then it is reasonable to suppose that the forces of NATO are already mobilized for this. Also, it is likely that, long before any such steps were taken, the intentions of both sides would be made plain and the United Nations would have an opportunity to vote to intervene.

* * *

What seems to have been generally overlooked is that there are steps "short of war" which can be taken by the West. These could be far more effective than actual threats of war.

One course of action could be the cutting of all diplomatic relations between the West and the East. This could be followed by simultaneous discontinuance of all commercial intercourse, as well as other forms of communications by air or by sea.

If, for instance, all ports of the Western nations were closed to Soviet shipping it would be difficult for the Communist empire to maintain its commercial relations with points in the Middle East and Asia. The trans-Siberian railway is not equipped to carry all the freight to Red China that goes to that country, for instance, from the eastern European satellites.

A total embargo would serve notice that the West means to stand on its treaty rights and that any imposition of barriers to free communication with Berlin would result not in a contest of military force but in a cessation of all traffic with East Germany and the other areas now controlled by the Soviet government.

To impose an embargo would require allied agreement, and this is by no means easy to effect. But it is a better plan than to try to resolve the differences between the East and West by military force.

* * *

President Eisenhower keeps emphasizing that the United States is not wedded to any single formula in trying to solve the problems raised by Moscow in connection with the status of Berlin. It had been hoped that by means of free elections a solution could be achieved. But since the Soviets do not wish to permit free elections in East Germany, the United States has taken the flexible position that some other solution might well be examined. This does not mean it will necessarily be accepted but simply that there is a readiness at least to talk about any plan.

One point that has not been given much attention is that when Moscow breaks the inter-allied treaty giving the Western military forces access to Berlin, this makes a "scrap of paper" out of a solemn agreement. Of what value, it will then be asked throughout the world, are any other agreements or pledges given by the Soviet government?

The Western nations, therefore, are waiting for the deadline in May when the Soviet government, if it carries out its published threat, will have announced to the world that, acting entirely on its own, it is deliberately breaking an international agreement. This, in turn, could invalidate all other agreements between the East and West and lead not necessarily to war but to a "quarantine" by the West against the Soviet dictatorship such as President Roosevelt proposed in 1937 against the dictatorship of Hitler and the Nazis.